



## STATEMENT OF AT&T CONNECTICUT

### Regarding Raised House Bill No. 6460 AN ACT CONCERNING PUBLIC ACCESS CHANNELS Before the Committee on Energy and Technology March 3, 2011

#### **Proposal:**

Raised House Bill No. 6460 makes various changes to the statutes regarding public access channels.

#### **Comments:**

AT&T is generally supportive of the intent of the underlying bill. However, we would request one additional piece of clarifying language to Section Three of the bill.

Community access operations are funded by subscribers through a monthly assessment on their bill which is annually set by the DPUC. These funds are collected by the providers and remitted to the designated community access provider.

While we understand the intent of the language found in Section 3 of the bill, we would request that the committee make clear that, while a provider may not collect for public access operations from its subscribers in any area where it has not interconnected, such a provider will also itself not be liable for such funds.

Many community access operations are managed in whole or in part by one of our competitors or its affiliates. As such, our competitors are part and parcel of the negotiations to get the programming from that provider onto our network. Successful negotiations require the desire on the part of both parties to reach an agreement. We would be concerned that one of our competitors could place us at a competitive and financial disadvantage by refusing to reach an agreement for us to carry community access programming; and the lack of an agreement could, under the underlying language, require that AT&T pay for community access operations until such a point in time that an agreement was reached. So under such a scenario, AT&T itself could be liable for such funds while our competitor could continue to rely on assessments from its customers for such costs.

#### **Conclusion:**

AT&T supports Raised House Bill No. 6460 but requests clarifying language to Section Three of the bill to ensure that a provider not allowed to assess customers for community access operations would itself not be liable for such costs.